

**Amendments to the Claims:**

*This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:*

1. (currently amended) A method for reducing a functional competency gap, the method comprising:

defining an employment function and preferred method of learning;

assessing functional competency based on the employment function via an online self-assessment;

identifying at least one gap between an assessed functional competency and a predefined competency required for the employment function; and

~~identifying at least one learning solution for reducing the at least one competency gap wherein the at least one learning solution is in accordance with the preferred method of learning~~

dynamically querying a database of available learning solutions to locate a learning solution that (i) is currently a best-in-class learning solution for reducing the at least one competency gap, and (ii) best matches the employee's preferred method of learning; and automatically defining a development plan for the employee including learning solution identified with the dynamic query.

2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one learning solution comprises classroom, software, online and on-the-job training learning activities.

3. (original) The method of claim 1 additionally comprising completing a learning activity associated with the at least one learning solution.

4. (original) The method of claim 3 additionally comprising evaluating the learning solution after completing the learning activity.

5. (original) The method of claim 3 additionally comprising evaluating best practices for implementing the at least one learning solution within a business unit.

6. (original) The method of claim 4 additionally comprising posting completed evaluations online for others to review.

7. (original) The method of claim 5 additionally comprising identifying roadblocks to the implementation of the learning solution within a business unit.

8. (original) The method of claim 3 additionally comprising completing an online examination after completing the learning solution to assess knowledge transfer during the learning activity.

9. (original) The method of claim 4 additionally comprising mining evaluation data to identify and make learning solution improvements.

10. (original) The method of claim 1 additionally comprising acquiring or selling learning solutions in an online auction format.

11. (original) The method of claim 1 additionally comprising mining online assessment data to identify preferred functional competencies for new employees.

12. (original) The method of claim 1 additionally comprising mining online assessment data to select current employees for a particular employment opportunity.

13. (original) The method of claim 1 additionally comprising assessing functional competency for an employment function other than an employee's current employment function.

14. (original) The method of claim 1 additionally comprising mining assessment data to select a group of employees having functional competencies necessary to perform a group-oriented task.

15. (currently amended) An online system for identifying at least one learning solution to reduce a functional competency gap, the system being configured to:  
receive input defining an employment function and preferred method of learning;

present an interactive assessment of functional competency based on the employment function;

identify at least one gap between an assessed level of functional competency and a predefined level of competency required for the employment function; and

~~present output identifying at least one learning solution for reducing the at least one competency gap wherein the at least one learning solution is in accordance with the preferred method of learning~~

dynamically query a database of available learning solutions to locate a learning solution that (i) is currently a best-in-class learning solution for reducing the at least one competency gap, and (ii) best matches the employee's preferred method of learning; and

automatically define a development plan for the employee including learning solution identified with the dynamic query.

16. (original) The system of claim 15 additionally configured to receive input defining: (i) interactive assessment content; (ii) learning solution content; and (iii) competency level requirements for the employment function.

17. (original) The online system of claim 15 additionally configured to host an online auction for the sale or purchase of learning solution content.

18. (original) The online system of claim 15 additionally configured to present an interactive learning solution.

19. (original) The online system of claim 17 additionally configured to facilitate mining employment function, competency assessment, competency gap, and evaluation data.

20. (currently amended) A system for reducing a functional competency gap, the system comprising:

a means for defining an employment function and preferred method of learning;  
a means for assessing functional competency for the employment function;  
a means for identifying at least one gap between a functional competency assessment and a predefined level of functional competency required for the employment function; and

a means for dynamically querying a database of available learning solutions to locate a learning solution that (i) is currently a best-in-class learning solution for reducing the at least one competency gap, and (ii) best matches the employee's preferred method of learning; and

automatically defining a development plan for the employee including learning solution identified with the dynamic query identifying at least one learning solution for reducing the at least one competency gap wherein the at least one learning solution is in accordance with the preferred method of learning.